

Why Should Midland Promote Non-Motorized Transportation (NMT)?

First of all, it's just plain fun, giving people the opportunity to connect with the natural environment and the community. You'll arrive at your destination refreshed and de-stressed, with pleasant outdoor activities becoming part of every day life.

NMT clearly enhances the quality of community life. Six of US News' latest Top 10 best places to live are Bicycle Friendly Communities. A good NMT program means that recreation opportunities become part of the built environment and people's daily routine.

The Federal Highway Administration reports that 3% fewer cars = nearly 30 % less peak congestion. 20-30% of "morning rush" traffic is transporting kids to school, and only 1/3 as many kids walk/bike to school as did in the 1970s. In the US, 40% of car trips are two miles or less; and 28% of trips are one mile or less, making them easy to do by bike and many can be walked. Half of the car trips in America can be completed within a 20-minute bike ride, and a quarter of trips are within a 20-minute walk.

Regular exercise reduces depression, obesity, heart and lung disease, cancers, ADHD, osteoporosis, diabetes, dementia, and more. The US currently spends \$150B/yr treating the largely preventable obesity/diabetes epidemic.

NMT can have a big economic impact. The North Carolina DOT reports a 9:1 tourism revenue return on investment in bicycle facilities. Compared to US averages, Portland, OR residents drive 5,000 fewer miles & spend 175 fewer hours in cars, saving \$2,500/yr in just "car costs." More than 80% of Portland businesses emphatically state that Portland's reputation for being a bicycle friendly city is good for their business. Brown County, WI reports that houses adjacent to bicycling facilities sell faster and for 9% more than average.

A recent US poll by Belden, Russonello, and Stewart showed that 53 % of Americans support increased federal spending on bicycle facilities, even if it means less gas taxes go to construction of new roads. Fifty-two percent said they would like to ride a bike more often. Midland has a great opportunity in front of it!

For more information: www.midland-mi.org/government/departments/planning/Planning/planninghome.htm